

## Mayor's Message

April 2011

With the many challenges that have come as the result of the Great Recession, the time has again come to focus on City budgeting options to respond to these difficult times. We are entering the fourth budget cycle that will require more cutting. While I continue to be optimistic about the future of our City, I am also realistic in recognizing where we are and the path to take to move Murray forward. While we are not alone in this position, our City is facing a time of evaluation and reorganization.

Currently we are projecting general fund revenues at about \$38 million. All the departments of the City have made repeated cuts to their operating and capital budgets over the last three years. Each time the budget was reviewed, more cuts were necessary. I have appreciated the effort that each department has made. Again this year in our effort to fill about a \$2 million dollar plus gap, departments cut an additional **\$1,013,305**. These cuts are not without consequences, but the effort made has been substantial.

With the careful budgeting of past years, the reserves of the City are available. I am recommending that we use some of the reserves to allow us to make a retirement incentive work and spend about another \$500,000 to balance the budget.

With these severe cuts, it leaves a long list of items not being funded. The only funding for roads this year will come from our Class C road fund allocation from State gas tax revenue and State money that was obtained to rebuild 4800 South. In the past we have spent approximately a million general fund dollars each year to provide upkeep on our roads. This money has been removed from the budget for the past three years and the time will come when we will have to invest significantly to maintain our roads. My budget includes recommendations to close the Park Center on Sundays and early on Friday evenings. This will save money on several fronts, from employees to utilities. Hours will also be reduced at the outdoor pool this summer, as a cost saving measure.

I would like residents to know of the needed capital expenses, lower number of employees and proposed reduction in services. While I understand the desire to keep taxes in check, I would suggest that a property tax increase be considered as part of the next budgeting process in 2012-13. Even with a modest tax increase, it will take many years to recover. As we look at changes that can be made to the way our City functions, I expect we will have people who are disappointed that the services they enjoy will be reduced or eliminated.

Murray is a great City and our potential is endless. Our taxes are low due to good planning and wise use of the dollars we receive from the great blend of businesses, commercial and residences we have here. My goal is to keep our City an excellent community for all those who live and work here. It will take some changes to make it continue that way.